

## FOREWORD

### PAPERS FROM THE IEA STUDY 'COMPUTERS IN EDUCATION' (COMPED)

The International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) was founded in 1959 for the purpose of conducting international comparative studies of achievement of school students. The IEA's aim is to study achievement against the wide background of school, classroom, home, student, and societal factors in order to enhance learning within and across systems of education. The IEA has grown over the years to a cooperative of 45 research institutes, whose studies have covered a wide range of subject matter areas [1].

The IEA decided in 1985 to start the 'Computers in Education' (Comped) study as a two-stage study with data collection in 1989 and 1992. The main data from stage 1 was collected in 22 educational systems. The results of this stage are (or will be) reported in a first report [2], in a research volume [3] and in articles in scholarly journals [4]. The second stage of the study will be a follow-up of stage 1 and will also include measures of student outcomes in the domain of computer use in schools (functional computer knowledge and skills).

IEA studies provide participating countries with an opportunity to study nationally relevant questions by adding to the international instruments some national options. These national options are usually only reported on a national level. We think that it is worthwhile to report internationally these kinds of results also, as we expect that many lessons can be learned from specific national experiences.

This issue of '*Computers & Education*' contains a set of this kind of articles. Researchers who were in their educational system responsible for the Comped study were asked to write about questions which were particularly relevant for their country, and which could only be studied in the broad context of the Comped study.

After our contribution, in which we summarize the design and some of the main findings of the study, three 'national' articles follow. These articles discuss national Comped findings in respectively The Netherlands and the U.S.A. They provide a variety of issues and illustrate nicely how national issues were addressed in the context of the study. Next to that, they provide a source of ideas for further national and international analyses of these data.

## REFERENCES

1. Hayes W. A., *IEA Guidebook 1993: Activities Institutions and People*. Pergamon Press, Oxford (1993).
2. Pelgrum W. J. and Plomp Tj., *The Use of Computers in Education Worldwide: Results from the IEA 'Computers in Education' Survey in 19 Education Systems*. Pergamon Press, Oxford (1991).
3. Pelgrum W. J. and Plomp Tj. (Eds), *Computers in Education: Implementation of an Innovation in 20 Countries*. In preparation.
4. Pelgrum W. J. and Plomp Tj., *Stud. Educl Evaluation* **19**, 99-232 (1993).

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